Hidden Workloads: A Survey of ACS Campuses

In order to get a sense of the scope and forms of hidden labor undertaken by faculty at ACS institutions, the chief academic officer at each ACS school was asked to send out a brief survey to all of their faculty. For participation in the survey, faculty were entered into a drawing to receive one of ten $25 Bookshop.org gift cards. The survey included three parts:

1. First, participants were asked to indicate which service tasks, out of a list generated from past literature and surveys done at Rollins and Centenary, they had engaged in during AY '21-22. This list included both recognized forms of labor such as service on committees and hidden/invisible labor such as mentoring, providing emotional support, and informal student advising. For a full list of items included, click here.
2. Participants were then asked to indicate how much time, on average, they spent on each task per week (of the tasks they had selected in the previous question) and to identify any additional forms of service and hidden labor not listed. The second part of the survey asked a series of demographic questions in order to examine the relations between hidden labor, rank, gender, institution, race, and academic discipline. We also asked faculty to indicate whether or not they had served as a division or department chair in AY '21-22.
3. Finally, participants were presented with a series of three open ended questions relating to their experiences with hidden labor at their institutions.

Between April 11-23, 2022, 431 faculty from 6 institutions opened the survey link. Faculty who responded to a majority of the quantitative questions or who provided at least one qualitative answer were included in the data analysis (N=314).

Respondent Demographic Information

Six of the sixteen ACS institutions were represented in this sample, with the largest percentages of respondents from Trinity University (29.9%), Washington and Lee University (25.5%), and Rollins College (19.7%). Participants came from all ranks within the faculty, with the fewest respondents in the early assistant professor category (3.8%) and the most respondents in the full professor category (39.2%). The disciplines with the strongest representation in this sample included the humanities (28%), natural and applied sciences (26.1%), and social sciences (22%).

Current Institution	N	%
Centenary College	14	4.50%
Centre College	48	15.30%
Millsaps College	16	5.10%
Rollins College	62	19.70%
Trinity University	94	29.90%
Washington and Lee University	80	25.50%

Table 1. Institutional affiliations.

Status/Rank	N	%
Contingent	37	11.80%
Assistant (1st 2 years)	12	3.80%
Assistant (2+years)	45	14.30%
Associate	94	29.90%
Full	123	39.20%

Table 2. Current rank/employment status.

Discipline	N	%
Social Sciences	69	22.00%
Natural and Applied Sciences	82	26.10%
Humanities	88	28.00%
Pre-professional	6	1.90%
Visual and Performing Arts	28	8.90%
Business	30	9.60%
Healthcare	4	1.30%
Other	7	2.20%

Table 3. Disciplinary affiliation.

Of the 314 respondents, 90 (28.7%) were current department or division chairs. The vast majority identified as cis-gender (91.1%: cis-women 54.5%, cis-men 36.6%) and White or Caucasian (85%). Some respondents also identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/x (9.6%).

Gender	N	%
Cis-man	115	36.60%
Cis-woman	171	54.50%
Trans woman	1	0.30%
Trans man	0	0%
Non-binary/third gender	1	0.30%
Prefer not to say	21	6.70%
Not listed	4	1.30%

Table 4. Gender identity of participants.

Race	N	%
Black or African American	7	2.20%
Asian	12	3.80%
White or Caucasian	267	85.00%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.30%
Not listed	16	5.10%
Multiracial	3	1.00%

Table 5. Racial identity of participants.

Importantly, within this sample, cis-women made up the largest percentage of faculty at all ranks. However, the percentage of women significantly dropped from the assistant to associate level and again from associate to full. While women made up 75% of assistant professors in their first two years, they only made up 44% of

full professors. Similarly, 45% of cis-men surveyed were full professors while this was the case for only 32% of women (although it is worth remembering that there are more women in the sample).

The numbers for race across rank also reflected disparities. 95% of full professors surveyed identified as White, including 41.9% of all White respondents. Only 17.7% of faculty of color respondents were full professors.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Overall, we found that the faculty surveyed reported engaging in an average of 13.8 of the 28 listed service tasks (max 25, SD 4.7) and spent about 20 hours per week on this work (max 60, SD 11.2). Over 75% of faculty report engaging in service related to student recruitment, planning programs, curricula and assessment, academic advising, and mentoring/caregiving. Some forms of labor were associated with higher levels of time investment than others. Specifically, serving on faculty senate or other governing bodies, serving on committees dealing with faculty issues, directing student research, maintaining equipment, and public exhibitions/performances each took up an average of more than 3 hours per week for at least 20% of faculty who engaged in these activities. Mentoring/caregiving also involved a major time investment, with 14.1% of respondents who selected this task indicating that 4 or more hours per week are devoted to it.

Demographics and Hidden Labor

Of the measured demographics, current rank/employment status was the only significant predictor of time spent on hidden labor in this sample. Time spent increased as rank increased, with Full Professors spending an average of 22 hours/week on service work, associate professors spending 19 hours/week, assistant professors spending 16 hours/week, and contingent faculty spending about 15 hours/week. These results contradict the research that suggests that the highest burden of service work is carried by associate professors (O'Meara et al).

Although race and gender did not differentially predict hidden labor when considered in isolation, the survey results did indicate some differences in labor when the intersection of these demographics was considered. For these analyses, we examined overall time spent and number of tasks, as previously discussed, but also looked at specific tasks associated with emotional (often invisible) labor including academic advising of advisees and non-advisees, mentoring faculty, both formally and informally, advising student organizations, and providing mentorship/caregiving for students. This group of tasks was further divided into formal emotional labor (advising assigned advisees, formal faculty mentoring, advising student organizations) and informal emotional labor (advising non-advisees, informal faculty mentoring, and mentorship/caregiving).

Participant rank significantly predicted overall emotional labor and informal emotional labor with contributions to service increasing with rank. Racial identity was associated with reported informal emotional labor, both in number of tasks and time spent. Specifically, participants who described their racial identity as American Indian or Alaska Native, Not Listed, or Multi-racial reported more time spent on informal emotional labor than participants who identified as Black, Asian, or White. When the intersectionality of race and gender is taken into account Black and Asian cis-women reported the highest levels of informal emotional labor. However, due to the homogeneity of survey respondents, these findings represent a very small number of total participants and should be interpreted with caution.

Rank also interacted with race and gender when it came to emotional labor. Overall, emotional labor increased with rank but participants who identified as Black or African American or Asian, and early assistant professors (with fewer than 2 years of experience) reported the highest levels of emotional labor, both formal and informal. Participants who identified as women reported higher levels of emotional labor overall and this held for all ranks except full professor, suggesting that perhaps there is more gender parity in this type of labor at higher ranks. Alternatively, this could simply reflect the demographic differences across ranks, with fewer women in full professor positions.

Department/Division Chairs
We also examined the labor of department/division chairs within our sample. Of the respondents who indicated that they are current chairs (n=90), the majority were full professors (59.6%), but there were also chairs from each of the other ranks as well (associate, 31.5%; assistant with 2+ years, 3.4%; assistant in first 2 years 1.1%; and contingent, 4.4%). This rank breakdown differs from previous research findings which suggested that associate professors disproportionately take on chair positions. As in the larger survey sample, the majority of chairs identified as cis-gender (88.9%, with 51.1% cis women) and White or Caucasian (88.6%).

In general, chairs reported engaging in an average of 16.3 tasks (of the 28) in AY '21-22 and spending an average of 23.7 hours per week or more on service work. Chairs reported spending around 7 hours per week on emotional labor (4.7 hours of which was on informal emotional labor).

Over 85% of chairs included the following tasks in their responses:

- Student recruitment
- Planning departmental programming, curricula, and assessment
- Advising assigned advisees
- Mentoring/caregiving/emotional labor
- Informally mentoring faculty

Chairs report spending the most time on planning programming, curricula, and assessment for their departments (3+ hours/week). At least 10% of chairs spent at 6 hours per week or more advising students, both assigned advisees and others, another 6 hours mentoring faculty (formally and informally), and more than 4 hours per week on emotional labor. Chairs' time also goes to directing student research (50% report 3+ hours per week).

Chairs who identify as women (trans- or cis-) reported significantly more time spent per week on caregiving/mentoring than chairs who identified as men ($p<0.05$). There was not sufficient diversity in the sample to test for racial differences or differences involving the intersection of race and gender.

Summary of Qualitative Findings
In addition to the quantitative survey data, we analyzed responses from three open-ended questions (listed below); the subsequent sections will summarize the emergent themes.

1. There are many forms of invisible labor and we recognize that we not have identified all of them. Please list other forms of labor included in your workload that were not identified in the previous question.
2. In what ways does your institutional structure increase the demands for invisible labor?
3. In what ways does your institutional structure seek to decrease or make visible hidden workloads?

Question 1
With respect to the first question, we recognize that many of the identified categories on the list were subject to varied interpretations. That said, below we include examples of invisible labor that were not fully captured in our survey options. They included:
- Accreditation and self-studies
- Animal care
- Budget management and expense reports
- COVID-related activities (e.g., delivering food to students in quarantine)
- Grant writing (e.g., speakers, course development, etc.)
- Immigration compliance
- Inventory of supplies for courses / studio work

- Media (e.g., social media, news inquiries, website development)
- Recommendation letters
- Responding to parents / guardians
- Supervising staff
- Technological support

The full list is available in Appendix A starting on page 8.

Question 2
When reflecting on how institutional structures contribute to increased invisible labor, faculty identified a range of contributing factors, including: budget constraints and hiring freezes, inefficient and decentralized bureaucracies, cultural expectations embedded within liberal arts institutions, identity-based emotional labor, lack of accountability and the "competency tax", and the absence of transparency in service expectations. (For a more comprehensive list, see Appendix B starting on page 11).

- *Budget Constraints* – budget constraints, and subsequent hiring freezes, were cited as impediments to faculty offices being fully staffed, which in turn led to "mission creep" – or more work being added without a reduction in other faculty responsibilities. Moreover, the failure of some ACS institutions to recognize, and appropriately compensate, this additional labor was noted as a perpetual problem. Finally, COVID-management only exacerbated the issues at hand. One faculty member, for instance, summarized the challenges in this way:
  - "But generally, we don't have the resources for a pay increase, we don't have the resources to cut back on our responsibilities in any meaningful way without letting balls drop left and right. I know our admin cares about us, but they do not seem to have any ability to actually help us. We are all running on fumes with the illusion of some sort of 'return to normal' as the carrot that no one will ever reach. Pre-COVID normal is gone, and though we have done our best to react to the challenges of the last two years, it remains to be seen how we will create a sustainable new normal moving forward. Because we are all at a breaking point right now, and it simply cannot continue this way."
- *Inefficient and Decentralized Bureaucracies* – Additionally, bureaucratic "red tape" and "dis-functional", decentralized systems within higher education were noted as impediments to more efficient, less time-consuming committee structures. Instead, a more streamlined approach to faculty governance might eliminate (or reduce) some of the workload redundancy issues.
- *Cultural Expectations within Liberal Arts Institutions* – Perhaps unique to the small liberal arts context, representative of our ACS institutions, invisible labor was discussed as built into the system. Specifically, faculty were expected to be "always accessible" as this remains a "selling point" for our institutions. As such many faculty wear "too many hats" and it is hard to say "no" within such a student-centered educational environment. Further, some ACS faculty believed that small colleges "exploit" these relationships and use rhetoric of a "family" to gain and maintain institutional buy-in for its mission.
- *Identity-based Emotional Labor* – Highlighted in the relevant literature ([Misra et al](); [O'Meara et al's](); [Wood et al]()), and echoed in some of these data, women, faculty of color, and LBGTQ+ faculty were disproportionately expected to fill "care-taking" roles at the institution, involving emotional labor which is more-often-than not undervalued and uncompensated. The cumulative impact of many "little asks" subsequently led to burn-out. Accordingly, one faculty member noted:
  - "The institution has structured its first-year seminar course such that whoever teaches this class also advisees these students for at least two semesters. In addition, this course is staffed by volunteers, who largely end up being women. As a result, this class, combined with gendered expectations of being approachable/caring/nurturing, creates big imbalances in advising load. This imbalance not only entails NUMBER of advisees, which also amount of emotional labor since first year students tend to face significant struggles in adjusting to college life. Because students also approach professors to ask them to become their advisor,

faculty members are most approachable (typically younger, typically women) are asked more often and feel pressure to accept these requests. In addition, voluntary service for things like staffing major/minor, planning departmental programming, and other student-centered extra-curricular programming designed to build community is typically undertaken by women (at least in my Department)."

- *Lack of Accountability and the "Competency Tax"* – The issue of invisible labor is then compounded when there is lack of accountability or consequences for faculty who do not engage with service at similar levels. Specifically, an over-reliance on (mainly women and people of color) volunteers resulted in older white men not being held to comparable standards as their peers. According to one participant, "they tend to ask the same people over and over. Those of us who are competent and get things done get more and more piled on our plates. Free-loaders simply say no and there are no repercussions."
- *Absence of Transparency in Service Expectations* – Finally, the lack of clear written guidelines and/or transparency in service expectations was deemed problematic. This became particularly troublesome during tenure and promotion decisions, when the criteria around service and what "counts" was considered to be too vague. Instead, some faculty would prefer explicit minimum standards (e.g., x hours/week) as one way to enforce more equitable service participation across departments/programs.

Question 3
Overall, there was general skepticism about this question – most believed that their institutions were not trying to decrease the demand for invisible labor and/or attempting to address the issue in an ineffective "surface" way. To that end, some noted that their institutions have engaged in these conversations, with little, or no, action taken other than "pats on the back" or "empty promises." Others, expressing clear frustration, wrote:

- "I feel abandoned."
- "I cannot think of anything. It has only gotten worse."
- "It doesn't. The lack of actually fixing known problems is appalling."
- "They say they do but I don't see any formal efforts actually change the way workloads are distributed. Administration KEEPS ADDING ON and they say we are going to do less with less, but that never happens."

However, other faculty noted positive changes, including cultural as well as structural shifts, in how invisible labor is managed at their institutions. Culturally speaking, emphasizing work-life balance, providing schedule flexibility, and acknowledging service through internal awards was appreciated.

Institutional strategies were just as important, and included support mechanisms such as: conducting service audits, offering pre-tenure leaves, hiring more staff, sunsetting programs and/or committees that are hard to sustain, and creating metrics in which invisible labor could be codified and financially compensated (e.g., stipends or course releases).

Limitations
Overall, our findings differ somewhat from the literature on hidden labor, suggesting that there may be some unique dynamics at play within the ACS institutions. However, in interpreting the results reported here, it is important to remember the homogeneity of respondents. Most faculty who responded to this survey were White and cis-gendered, making analysis of racial and gender differences severely limited. Additionally, we only received responses from 6 of the 16 ACS institutions and thus we cannot generalize this data to the full ACS faculty population.

Contributions

Despite these limitations, these data do align with national trends, as well as information in the relevant literature, on the professional and personal implications of invisible labor and the potential strategies institutions can employ to attend to these (often) race, gender, and rank-based inequities.

Appendix A: Other Forms of Invisible Labor

- Accreditation and self-studies
- Administrative duties
- Admissions Days, prospective students, and the pipeline
    - Networking with high school teacher
- Advising
    - Responding to student registration questions
    - Student clubs
    - Advocating for better institutional policies and procedures
- Animal care
- Assessment
- Budget management and expense reports
- Cleaning office and lab spaces
- Coaching
- Community service
    - Non-profit volunteer Board of Directors
    - Connecting with the private sector
    - Governmental organizations
- COVID
    - Delivering food to students
- Course related
    - Academic dishonesty and reporting
    - Adoption of Learning Management software (e.g., Canvas)
    - Covering classes for colleague on leave
    - Coordinating student domestic and international travel
    - Facilitating global exchange relationships
    - Field trip coordination
    - Grading
    - Guest lectures in other colleagues' classes
    - Helping students finish incompletes
    - Independent study courses
    - Interdisciplinary programs
    - New course preps
    - Orientation and First-Year Experience
    - Serving on jury panel
    - Senior theses
    - Teaching overloads
    - Teaching in study abroad program
    - Time management related to following health protocols in COVID-era classrooms
    - Theater production management, rehearsals, etc.
- Departmental

- - Directing or chairing department, program, and/or minor
- Event planning
  - Coordinating guest speakers / writers / workshops to campus
  - Departure and retirement parties
  - Recruiting participants for events
- Faculty/staff professional development
  - Compiling DEI resources
  - Leading faculty workshops
- Grant writing (e.g., speakers, course development, etc.)
- Immigration compliance
- Informal DEI work
- Informal talks for non-scholarly audiences
- Inventory of supplies for courses / studio work
- Job applications (if lack stable employment)
- Job search ad development
- Media
- Social media for department and/or program
- News media inquiries / answering emails from the public
  - Website development
- Mentoring alumni
- Mentoring untenured faculty
- Moving offices
- Observing classes for tenure and promotion files
- Office hours (additional or "extra" hours)
- Recommendation letters
  - Coordinating cross-institutional educational competition
  - Managing alumni fund for student awards
- Recruitment and retention efforts
- Report writing (internal reports like annual reports, faculty reports, etc.)
- Responding to parents / guardians
- Preparing for meetings
- Professional service
- Reviewing manuscripts or literary journals
  - Conference discussant
  - Committee member on professional organizations
- Publishing outside of academia
- Serving on panels
- Student awards and recognitions
  - Honor societies
  - Coordinating undergraduate scholarship programs
- Supervising staff
- Supporting faculty/staff

- - - Achievements
    - Addressing faculty misbehavior
    - Childcare
    - Colleagues in crisis
    - Health issues
    - Under-represented faculty/staff
- Supporting students
  - Attending student performances, athletic events, presentations, etc
  - Handling student complaints
  - Non-majors/minors
  - Students in crisis, mental health concerns, etc.
  - Under-represented students
- Surveys
- Task Forces (e.g., Presidential)
- Technological support

Appendix B: Institutional Structure Increase Demands for Invisible Labor

- Budget constraints
- Bureaucracy and structural considerations
  - Creating new processes, which adds to red tape and inefficiencies
    - Administration form committees to avoid making unpopular decisions
  - Decentralized systems
    - No centralized place for "asks"
  - Dis-functional advising system
  - Faculty micro-managed within governance structure
  - Faculty do a lot of work with little voice with administration
  - Flat administrative structure
  - Inefficient and time-consuming decision-making
  - Lack of efficiency in committee structures
    - Redundancy in committees
  - Lack of trust and/or collaboration between AA and SA
  - Non-supervisors add to faculty workload
- Compensation
  - Stipends eliminated
  - Course releases not granted
- Competency tax
- Culture of University
- Emotional labor / caretaking falls mainly on women and POC
  - Need to hire more therapists so faculty not responsible for emotional labor
- Frequent leadership changes leading to departmental challenges
- Hiring freezes / vacancies
  - Hiring more VAP who do not do service
  - Limited faculty pool to do the work
    - Heavy teaching load
  - NTT faculty feel pressure to "step up" to demonstrate value
  - Re-assign labor when vacancies arise
  - Under-staffed departments/programs/offices
    - Lack of professional staff to support the work
- Lack of recognition for "unofficial" service
- Lack of accountability or "punishment" if faculty do not volunteer/engage
  - Over-reliance on faculty volunteers (mainly women and POC)
  - No accountability if older white male faculty do not engage in service
    - Invisible labor should be rotated
    - Should only be able to serve on one committee at a time
- Lack systematic process to track service overloads
  - Generated faculty reports do not allow add ins of additional service
- Liberal arts mission = expectation that faculty are always available

- Merit review processes rewards work overloads
- Mission creep
  - Task forces, ad hoc committees, etc. keep increasing without any recognition or compensation (e.g., stipends, salary increases, course releases, etc.)
  - Work constantly added without reducing other responsibilities
- New processes or technologies lead to more trainings
- Reward mechanisms do not acknowledge invisible labor
- Service taxation – the same people constantly tapped to serve
  - Faculty of color perform most of DEI work
    - Failing to hire and retain faculty of color
  - Cumulative impact of many "little asks"
- Size of departments and/or programs
- Unrealistic expectations set by high performing faculty
  - There is a culture of "martyrdom"
- Under-paid
- Unequal labor across departments/programs
- Un-written rules / lack of clear guidelines and transparency
  - High service expectations without clear written guidelines
  - Need to be explicit in minimum standards (e.g., 40 hours/week)
  - Vague tenure and promotion criteria
    - Invisible labor does not "count" in T&P reviews
- Voluntold duties = burnout
  - Asked to serve on committees and then voice not valued (e.g., POC, women)
  - Ask to do it "for the good of the institution"
- Work-life balance issues
  - Asked to work during off-contract months (e.g., summer, weekends, evenings, holidays)

Appendix C: Institutional Structure Decrease Demands for Invisible Labor

- None / Nothing / NA
- Acknowledgements of labor / honoring service (e.g., awards or recognition)
- Being proactive, not reactive
- Clear communication about expectations
- Committee assignments that consider other major service commitments
- Compensating faculty for additional work
- Conducting service audits
- Discouraging academic overloads
- Focus groups to understand perspectives of faculty
- Hiring more staff
- Making invisible labor visible in tenure and promotion committee meetings
- Opportunities to self-report activities on faculty activities report
  - Allowing for open narratives at end-of-year reviews
- Pre-tenure leaves
- Protecting first-year faculty
  - Release them from heavy service loads
- Reducing meetings
- Rubrics for merit raises calculations, but these need to be re-evaluated as more work is added
  - Explicit inclusion of advising in departmental promotion & performance criteria
- Schedule flexibility (e.g., remote and in-person days to balance work/child and family care)
- Sunsetting programs and/or committees that are hard to sustain or are unnecessary
- Surveys like this
- Urging people to take a break during weekends